

# Letters to the Editor

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Editor's Note: *The following letters on the conflict in Kosovo were received over a span of several months. They are being presented together as a unit in order to maintain their context.*

*To the Editor:*

In spirit and tone, Irving Louis Horowitz's recent article on the "Vietnamization of Yugoslavia" puts him in the company of such august intellectuals as Immanuel Wallerstein, Noam Chomsky, and Edward Said. Normally, this would be quite good company, except in this case, he and the above-mentioned intellectuals, have used the NATO war not to address the key issue of the relationship between state power and human rights, but as a stage to rehearse ideological critiques of America and American interventionism. Many prominent intellectuals, particularly those on the left, came out came out strongly against the NATO war, but since most of them had been little concerned with Yugoslav affairs before the breakup of the country, most of their anything about the Balkan situation, most of their responses were simply restatements of a deeply felt anti-American and anti-imperialist positions. Rather than consider the important question of whether or not human rights must be protected by force if necessary, some of the leading luminaries of the left found themselves willing to allow Milosevic to continue his butchery rather than find themselves in agreement with American policy.

The NATO attack might well have been an exertion of American power, but it was also designed to stop Milosevic and prevent a repetition of the mass murder that he perpetrated in Croatia and Bosnia. Indeed, I was shocked that his article did not mention even once the context of state-sponsored mass murder perpetrated by the Serbs in these places. That strikes me

as a glaring omission given that the entire Western response was grounded in the recognition that Milosevic was prepared to do the same thing to the Kosovar Albanians that he did to the Bosnians, namely, to commit genocide against them. I was troubled by Horowitz's attempt to disqualify the use of the term genocide to describe the situation in Kosovo: I agree that this is a complex issue, but his *own* definition of genocide in his book *Taking Lives: Genocide and State Power* was expansive enough to include what happened to the Kosovars. In that work, he argued that genocide is the "structural and systematic destruction of innocent people by a bureaucratic state apparatus" and this is exactly what happened in Kosovo. In his treatment of the KLA in his article, it is clear that he doesn't consider the Albanians as entirely innocent, but the KLA does not speak for all Albanians and most victims of Serbian repression were innocent civilians. The NATO campaign actually succeeded rather well in its objectives which were to move the Serbian military out of Kosovo, to stop the ethnic cleansing, and to install a protection force to keep the killing from starting again. Horowitz claims that the NATO bombing actually accelerated the ethnic cleansing. It is certainly the case that Milosevic used the war as a pretext for stepping up his campaign against the Kosovars, a campaign that had long been in the works as anyone familiar with the last ten years of repression in Kosovo would know. Yet Milosevic, not NATO, bears the responsibility for this. I cannot imagine that he would blame the Allies for Hitler's stepping up of the campaign against Jews in response to Allied attacks.

So while military hegemony has been reestablished, the war was also a decisive victory for the protection of human rights in Europe. My own view is that universal human rights are not

yet normative and under certain conditions they need to be enforced through force. I agree with Horowitz and others like Chomsky who argue that there is hypocrisy in American policy on human rights, that the US intervenes in some situations, but not in others and that this renders the NATO motives questionable. But I am a pragmatist on these matters. For reasons of politics and expediency, not all human rights violations can be responded to equally. One cannot fail to act in some cases because one cannot act in all cases. I would love to see the US act in a less hypocritical way in relation to human rights abuses, to bring pressure on the Turks, for instance, to stop abusing Kurds, to force the Chinese to stop abusing Tibetans. At the end of the day, however, this unified military action has at least stopped Milosevic's brutal campaigns. It was messy, innocent people suffered, but at the end of the day, after watching Milosevic kill for ten years and knowing that he was prepared to keep on killing, I could see no other alternative than to use force against him. The war brought suffering to many, including some of the Albanians whom it meant to help, but in the end, I take the utilitarian view that it alleviated more suffering than it caused. I wonder if Horowitz realizes that ordinary Albanians view NATO as their liberators and accept the fact that some of their own people had to die in NATO bombings in order to stop Milosevic.

I am no fan of military power, but the situation was drastic and demanded drastic measures. The Milosevic regime has proven time and again, in Bosnia, and elsewhere, that it does not respond to negotiation: time and again, he has waged war against the powerless while the West was negotiating with him. As Stjepan Mestrovic and I argue in our edited volume, *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (NYU Press, 1996) it was clear very early on in Bosnia that Milosevic would only respond to force and, thus, it was clear that negotiating with him would have disastrous consequences: he was adept at using negotiation as a cover for the acceleration of ethnic cleansing.

While he has only recently been indicted as a war criminal, it was clear that he was one from the beginning of the wars which he started in 1991 and it is terribly bad precedent to negotiate with war criminals, especially when the evidence for their crimes is so patently clear. The West resolved to stand Milosevic's duplicity no longer and its tougher stance against him was, in my opinion, a positive evolution away from a deeply flawed policy of aiding and abetting his aggression. NATO understood the perils of negotiating with the Serbs going in to Rambouillet and that is why the latter was an ultimatum rather than a negotiation. Anyone with even the faintest understanding of the historical results in terms of mass death that came from negotiating with Milosevic could not seriously argue that he could be negotiated with over Kosovo. And so Horowitz's preference for negotiation, while noble and heartfelt, is, in my opinion naive and would have had disastrous consequences for the Kosovars.

Now to the issue of the KLA. In his article, Horowitz was deeply influenced by Chris Hedges's *Foreign Affairs* article on the KLA. Unlike Hedges, though, who is deeply immersed in the situation on the ground, he does not provide any historical context on the origins of the KLA. Hedges takes great pains to actually be sociological and outline how the KLA and its increasing militancy was a product of the intense repression that the Kosovar Albanians had suffered under Milosevic since he came to power in 1989. As Horowitz should know, when Milosevic took power in 1989, he revoked the autonomy of Kosovo and began a systematic policy of human rights abuses that were among the worst of their kind in Europe. Kosovo was basically a police state. Hedges stresses this fact very strongly, and still manages to point out the shadowy and undemocratic tendencies of the organization. In his article, Horowitz chooses only to stress the latter. Certainly, the KLA is not pure—and it is important to offer a critical perspective on any political movement. It was disturbing, though, that Horowitz presented his

view of the KLA without the appropriate historical and sociological context of its emergence, namely, that it was a guerilla army fighting against Serbian repression. KLA members were deeply aware of what happened in Bosnia and were not going to get caught like the Bosnians did (the Bosnians never imagined that Milosevic would do to them what he did and were not prepared—the KLA was not so stupid). In fact, I don't blame the KLA at all for not wanting to give up their weapons and it is remarkable that they have chosen to do so in such great numbers. The Bosnians yielded their self-defense to UN, were put in safe areas, and then left to be killed in places like Srebrenica, where over 8000 people were massacred as the UN troops stood by. What would Horowitz do if he were a Kosovar Albanian facing the possibility of a repetition of those events?

As for the assertion that the NATO support of the KLA is similar to the American support of the Thieu regime, this is false. The Thieu regime and the KLA both have shadowy dimensions, but the Thieu regime was representative of a *state* whereas the KLA was a military faction mobilizing against one of the most oppressive regimes in contemporary Europe, a regime that had systematically abused Kosovar Albanians for ten years (and which had explicitly stated intentions to engage in the ethnic purification of the province). That difference is essential, yet Horowitz fails to recognize it. He must surely recognize that there is a fundamental difference between the KLA and the Vietnamese regime. I should point out that his view of the KLA is dangerously close to that of the Milosevic regime itself: one will recall that Milosevic grounded his campaign in the ideology that he was fighting "Muslim terrorists" who were threatening "innocent" Serbs. This view swayed many people and the fact that so many people bought into it by aping it in different venues is deeply troubling to me and indicative of a failure of the moral responsibility of intellectuals to distance themselves from the positions of fascists. Horowitz knows, of course, that

Hitler claimed that the Sudetenland Germans needed his "protection" against hostile enemies. Any critical intellectual writing at that time would have been obligated to point out the ideology strategy of domination which masks itself as "protection."

Unlike Professor Horowitz, I was a child during the Vietnam War and it did not stamp my consciousness like it did his and others of his generation. I understand that the Vietnam experience left a strong impression on his generation and that the event is an ongoing reference point for the interpretation of ongoing events. That experience cut across political lines and this explains why he and people like Chomsky, Said, and Wallerstein, who are very different politically, can offer such strikingly similar views of the NATO war. The habit of being suspicious of American power is deeply stamped in Horowitz's generation and it has guided his interpretations in the present war. Indeed, what is so striking is that so many Western intellectuals have used the NATO attack as a pretext for rehearsing ideological shibboleths and platitudes of a previous era. He and others have used the Vietnam analogy, but good analogies have to be grounded in specific historical facts. That the NATO war was not Vietnam is evident: in contrast to Horowitz's assertion, the objectives of the action were painstakingly clear from the outset and the military action to achieve them was decisive. NATO won the war. It did not drag on for ten years as in Vietnam or cost 50,000 American lives, and the war was a unified action by the NATO alliance rather than a unilateral action on the part of America, as was the case in Vietnam.

My overall view is that the analogy to Vietnam is simply unsustainable and is not instructive at all for understanding the NATO war. There are three points that Horowitz makes that I would agree with to some extent: first, that the NATO war was an expression of American hegemony, which is not always a bad thing (American hegemony crushed Hitler and the USSR, two admirable outcomes in my opinion); second, that the war was not purely motivated by a

concern for human rights and might have been a ploy by Clinton to salvage something of his reputation in history. Of course, it could have been both. I am amazed at the extent to which so many anti-Clintonites opposed the war simply because they hated Clinton so much. The Republican opponents of the NATO war were notable in this regard. Most leftists opposed the war not because they hate Clinton, but because they hate America; third, we are likely to be involved in Kosovo for a long time. Even if this is the case, though, it is not clear that American involvement in the world as a kind of police force is, on its face, everywhere and always a negative phenomenon. Remember that American troops were stationed in Germany throughout the post-war period and Germany thrived. The question is this: can Kosovo regain its autonomy and even independence (which I think it deserves because there is no way that Kosovars can live under Serbian rule after what the Serbs did to them) with American support? If so, would American intervention be positive or negative in its essential character? Lewis Feuer, in his book, *Imperialism and the Anti-Imperialist Mind*, notes that there is constructive imperialism and destructive imperialism. It might be worth revisiting that work for some insights into the possible constructive ends of American intervention as well as the pervasive influence of anti-imperialist ideology on judgment of American actions abroad.

In my view, Horowitz's article is not an exercise in analogy, but an exercise in metaphor. He has made a connection between two events which, in my opinion, is not born out by the historical facts of the case. He has evoked a powerful metaphor—that of Vietnamization, which is one of the most powerfully negative metaphors in American culture and has done so as a means of expressing his legitimately held view of opposition to the war. Recall Simmel's discussion of the difference between analogy and metaphor, written about brilliantly by Siegfried Kracauer in a seminal essay on Simmel. In his essay, Kracauer writes: "When you have an authentic analogy, the parallelism of

events that it claims must actually exist. Their synonymy is free of all subjective arbitrariness ... the metaphor is a creation of fantasy, of the imaginative power of the psyche; we evaluate it aesthetically and furthermore require that it be striking and illuminating ñ that it render visible, in a complete and unadulterated way, everything that we have projected intellectually or emotionally onto the object. [Metaphor] is not a type of knowledge like the analogy, but is rather a receptacle for our thoughts about things, an expression of our interior, a mirroring of self in the world of appearances."

My own view is that Professor Horowitz, and many other intellectuals of his generation who have written about this war, have projected negative views which they gained as a result of their common experience of Vietnam. I don't question for a moment that his views are deeply felt and even courageous. Yet, I still think what has happened is a projection of those generationally conditioned ideas onto the present. I know that Professor Horowitz is a great and trenchant critic of subjectivism and ideological thinking. So I would ask him to reflect on his own piece as one that might, in fact, be influenced by his own subjective and ideological dispositions regarding American power. Let me be clear: I have the deepest respect for him as an intellectual and his critical abilities. I know Professor Horowitz is a skilled dialectician, as well, and perhaps by rethinking the historical comparison between Kosovo and Vietnam the purely metaphorical aspects of the comparison, which are ultimately subjective, might recede in favor of empirical and objective analysis.

I would be the first to admit that my own lack of generational experience with Vietnam might make me less of a critic of America than I should be. But I think that one can be critical of American policies without letting defenseless people die. The strong have an obligation to the weak. Speaking for myself, I can recognize that Vietnam was a fiasco, but I also recognize that there are other reference points against which

American actions can be interpreted. The most significant is World War II: American intervention in that war stopped Hitler. It saved the Jews from almost certain destruction. Milosevic is, to be sure, no Hitler and what happened to the Kosovars is not analogous to what happened to the Jews. I was, like Elie Wiesel, against the comparison of Kosovo with the Holocaust precisely because it was a metaphorical and emotional comparison put forth for ideological reasons rather than for reasons of doing good historical analogy. But like Wiesel, I felt what was happening to the Kosovars, whatever we might choose to call it, had to be stopped. I wish it had happened another way, but history puts tough choices in front of us and no politics is pure.

*Thomas Cushman*

*Whitehead Associate Professor of Critical Thought*

*Associate Professor of Sociology*

*Editor, Human Rights Review*

*Wellesley College*

*Wellesley, Massachusetts*

*To the Editor:*

I liked Professor Horowitz's piece, "The Vietnamization of Yugoslavia," perhaps with a touch of vanity, as its contours resemble what I have written for the *The Nation* under the title "Reflections on Kosovo." He is somewhat more careful than I am in formulating the basic position, and takes better account of the domestic political foundations, but we both see the disturbing analogies to Vietnam in the modalities of the US approach to Kosovo by way of "zero-casualty warfare." I also very much agree with the comments on the Hague indictment of Milosevic, as well as his important and sensitive discussion of the non-applicability of the Holocaust analogy. I focus a bit more than he does on the sort of precedent being created in relation to "humanitarian intervention" and on the sub-texts that have driven the policy in deforming directions.

*Professor Richard Falk*

*CIS/Bendheim Hall*

*Princeton University*

*Princeton, New Jersey*

*To the Editor:*

Professor Horowitz and I see eye to eye on this Kosovo business 100 percent. I marvel at how calmly he presents it. I doubt I could write anything on this sick mess without venting my bile at that NATO press guy [Jamie Shea], the Pentagon guy with the bow tie, [Kenneth Bacon] Mother Boss (what the Soviet mediator calls Madeleine Albright), American TV (Totally Vacuous), you name it. I am so frustrated that I am relegated to Comedy Central and the NBA playoffs. My own take on the air strikes is that the Council on Foreign Relations clique that is still playing geopolitics and is into "containing the World Island" is now in the ascendance in the White House court, ... led by, irony of ironies, a guy named Strobe [Talbot].

*Professor Ted Becker  
Dept. of Political Science  
Auburn University  
Auburn, Alabama*

*To the Editor:*

Professor Horowitz is correct about the symbolic and ideological framework without which the NATO involvement remains a mystery. Note the heated discussion in *Telos*. Despite the decentralist politics and critical hermeneutics to which the entire editorial board declares itself committed, the individual editors took sides in terms of where they stood in the sixties. The old New Leftists cited Elie Wiesel about the family resemblance between Milosevic and Hitler and called for the upholding of "human rights" for the secessionist Albanians. My own dissent expressed how torn I was as the nephew of four soldiers who fought for the Habsburgs against the Serbs in having to oppose this NATO act of aggression. I'm also appalled now that the intervention is winding down to hear that we may have to protect the Serbs still left in Kosovo against the KLA. To me it is a matter of choosing between evils, and I don't find the Serbs quite as disgusting as their enemies. But there is no compelling reason for us to be militarily involved there on either side. Horowitz's description of the KLA as a mixture of every

conceivable pain in the ass is just about right. It is all those things but certainly no pressing American business. In any case, he did a good thing by analyzing this mess so perceptively.

*Professor Paul Gottfried  
Dept. of Political Science  
Elizabethtown College  
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania*

*To the Editor:*

I have completed reading Professor Horowitz's work on "The Vietnamization of Yugoslavia." It is an excellent piece which brings together historical data on two conflicts in order to make central points about war, peace, moral judgments, and future policy.

One of the powerful threads running through the piece is something that we do not write much about these days, an idea which can be traced to the beginning of the Republic. The founding fathers believed that all people were good and loved freedom and that only certain forms of governments are bad (non-democratic). This is why America can intervene in a country, bomb it into oblivion, and then turn around and provide billions of dollars to rebuild (as a democracy). I think that America is unique in this tradition, and this tradition continues to guide our intervention policies. The question, as he posed in his article, is which countries do we decide to "help," given that conflicts are breaking out around the globe.

I suspect that what happened is that this basic philosophical tradition of America was pasted to the policy of NATO. Indeed, as Horowitz noted, the conflict gave NATO another reason to be (from defense to offense). Thus Slobodan Milosevic is in the tradition of a long line of leaders who violate the freedom of people. Once his government is destroyed, then the people are o.k. What this policy means is that once the government is destroyed, then the people are o.k. Thus there was nothing wrong with the Japanese, for example, except that they were influenced by a bad government. Free the Germans from Hitler and the people are just people; free the Chinese from their government then they are just people; re-

place the southern form of government of slavery and the people will be fine. This single idea, I think, has influenced the debate between the isolationists and those who would like to "save the world for democracy." Of course he made this point at the start of his paper (NATO responded against an outlaw nation or state), grounding it in the uniquely American tradition of all people are good but governments make them bad. I do not think that Clinton understood this policy, with all of its ramifications (he certainly never talked about it); thus his entire administration does not understand that the question, as noted above, is when and *how* to intervene.

The part about making comparisons between the experience of Jews in Germany and ethnic cleansing in this conflict is outstanding. Germany had a program, grounded in history with an explicit goal of total extermination. There were no roads leading away from cities for Jews to take, but rather a well coordinated train ride to extinction. It might be good to address this point in a separate paper. I am reminded when Everett Hughes spoke to my graduate seminar on his paper, "Good People and Dirty Work." Also, this argument by Clinton led to a faulty conclusion on when to intervene.

Of course this conflict is winding down, and it looks as though there is surrender to troops on the ground (it is hard to surrender to an airplane). The big question is how long will the "peace" last and what is the impact of Clinton's policy of bombing on future military policy. There are Vietnams waiting to happen everywhere.

*Professor John Sibley Butler  
Dept. of Sociology  
University of Texas at Austin  
Austin, Texas*

*To the Editor:*

Am I the only one who has not given up on the United Nations? Especially in light of Russia's eventual role as a negotiator, why does everyone assume that if we had gone to the Security Council in the first place, and tried to make a post-cold war politics out of the peace process—that Russia (or China)

would have vetoed a UN resolution? What ever happened to the idea of diplomacy? To me the first "lesson" of all this is that we should pay our UN dues and start to treat it like the post-cold war organization it could become.

*Victor Navasky*

*Publisher and Editorial Director*

*The Nation*

*New York, New York*

*To the Editor:*

I'm struck by the prescience of Prof. Horowitz's essay on the character of the KLA, what genocide is and isn't, the expansion of bombing, and the general muddle of US foreign policy. However bad the mess is now in Kosovo, I fear that the consequences with China and Russia may yet be still worse.

*Professor Bruce Russett*

*Dean Acheson Professor of Political Science*

*Yale University*

*New Haven, Connecticut*

*To the Editor:*

Professor Horowitz's article on "The Vietnamization of Yugoslavia" is powerful and clever, but not persuasive—at least not to me. Our disagreements are fundamental. They provoke me to think further about the suffering of millions under communism—in Russia, China, Vietnam, Cuba, and elsewhere. These are place where we were unprepared to take even a moral stand, let alone fight for their freedom. It's now a choice between Pax Americana and Pax Sovietica.

*Professor David Marsland*

*Brunel University*

*Isleworth, Middlesex*

*United Kingdom*

*The Editor-at-Large Responds:*

The issues raised by the US-NATO alliance efforts in Yugoslavia on behalf of the Kosovars, are important unto themselves, but even more significantly, they seem to have touched raw nerves regarding what the United States hoped to accomplish and what in fact it did accomplish. As Michael Mandelbaum pointed out in *Foreign Affairs*, there is a huge difference between celebrating

a military victory and acknowledging a political defeat. For my part, I am not even certain this adventure in Kosovo can be described as a military victory given the power sharing arrangements with Russia that provide the possibility of a direct area of confrontation between the two nations.

Let me deal first with Professor Cushman's analytical statements followed by his strange descent into ad hominem socio-babble. My primary purpose in "The Vietnamization of Yugoslavia" (*Society*, July/August 1999) was to inventory the risks and rewards of American leadership in this NATO adventure. It most certainly was not to legitimate claims for the socialist regime of Milosovic to oppress ethnic minorities nor to make a claim at being an expert in Balkan politics and history. Milosovic's barbaric actions, and whether they can remotely be justified, are not in contention. There has been an extraordinary level of violence and aggression in the region throughout at least seven centuries, with enough nameless tyrants to go around. One hardly needs to be expert in the region to appreciate that accumulated phylogenetic hatreds do not dissolve under the barrel of foreign guns. Whether Serbians are more brutal than Kosovars, or whether Christians have a more (or less) worthy cause than Muslims in Pristina, is beside the point.

There was no monopoly of state power, no monopoly of firepower, and certainly no monopoly of moral power on either side of this conflict. There is enough evil and aggression against innocents to go around. Even NATO leaders, such as Lt. Commander Louis Garneau, speak in broad abstractions about "violence going on at unacceptable levels in the current context." He dared not assign blame to any one ethnic group. More ominous—and reminiscent of the festering political environment in Vietnam after the French exit and before the US military involvement—is his approach to controlling violence: "The long term solution is the establishment of a police force." In short, it means converting the present (July 20, 1999) 5000 United

States troops (and the 20,000 or so other NATO troops) from a transitional force to a permanent military presence, presumably along the lines of the current peacekeeping force in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is now widely acknowledged that left to their own devices the Kosovars will be ruled by the neo-fascist KLA. This most emphatically raises the specter of the long and futile presence of the French in Vietnam in this century.

The master problem with respect to Kosovo is not the recent existence of killing fields in that province, but their persistence throughout Yugoslavia, historically as well as contemporarily. How does one factor in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Serbs during World War Two by the Croatian fascists and their Muslim allies? If historic memory is now a sufficient reason for civil conflict on the part of the Kosovars and Albanians, should not the same sort of consideration be paid to Serbs with respect to their not too distant enemies? Civil war and ethnic and religious rivalries are frequently combustible when combined. But to call what occurred "genocide" assumes a set of facts that simply do not obtain in the larger Yugoslavian entity. Indeed, Steven Erlanger in *The New York Times* (August 30, 1999) now informs us that "perhaps 25,000 to 30,000 Serbs remain in the province [of Kosovo] down from an estimated prewar population of perhaps 180,000." When the expulsion of the Gypsy population is tacked on, this figure swells even more. Professor Cushman's silence on an "ethnic cleansing" of equal if not greater magnitude than the one that prompted our initial involvement is disconcerting.

The plain fact is that however horrible the mutually destructive violence is in Yugoslavia, it does not now, nor did it previously, rise to the level of genocide. Generally speaking, the hallmarks of genocide are the concentration not diffusion of political or military power. The destruction of rivals is systematic, not random or sporadic. Killing occurs at the behest of the state, as a part of the ideological arsenal of the ruling class or dominant clique. That

these conditions do not obtain in Yugoslavia does not signify any less sorrow one must feel over the shedding of innocent lives, the raping of innocent women, and the destruction and removal of people from their ancestral lands and homes.

In this matter of the bombings, Cushman seems unperturbed by using arguments by extension—a technique he would deny to me. At least one trouble with his analogies is that, unlike the Kosovar cleansing of the Serbs, there is not a shred of evidence of Jewish retaliation against Germans as a people after the defeat of the Nazi regime. Another difficulty is that the immensity of the massacre of Jews is simply in a different realm. Cushman's analogy between the bombing of Yugoslavia and the bombing of Germany in 1943-45 is both morally obtuse and factually without merit. One point of fact: In their infinite discipline, the Nazis did not require a pretext to murder six million Jews systematically. The allied bombings did not save the Jewish innocents, at least those Jews in the Nazi death camps. To be sure, such measures were entertained but vetoed. I for one wish that the Allies had bombed to hell every death camp. It would have cost precious lives, but alerted the world to the process of the Holocaust. In so doing it would have slowed, if not halted, the process of systematic murder. Moreover, to speak of the NATO-US air campaign in Yugoslavia as "a decisive victory for the protection of human rights in Europe" is hard to justify on a variety of counts. The "end of the day" Cushman speaks of is yet to come, and the number of victims—on both sides—continues to mount. The end will not come as long as the posture of moral equivalence epitomized by his statement remains the marching order of the day. The Orwellian notion of peace through war and human rights through devastating bombings is fearsome. It illustrates a growing tendency among human rights activists, irritated by the continuation of strife in the world, who wish to be seen as hard-boiled political players who are as realistic as the traditional war crowd.

We turn now to the second element in Cushman's letter, a scarcely veiled attack on my reasons for opposing the US-NATO adventure. The argument that I am guilty by association comes right at the start of Cushman's statement. The "spirit and tone" of my article, he claims, "puts [me] in the company of such august intellectuals as Immanuel Wallerstein, Noam Chomsky, Edward Said." That such McCarthyist sentiments are unwarranted is transparent. Suppose I were to say that Cushman's views put him in the company of such august intellectuals as David Rieff, Vanessa Redgrave, and Anthony Giddens, would that make him a hard leftist? I was at great pains to observe that the war in Yugoslavia has sharply divided old friends, made new enemies, and provided new fault lines for the politics of all concerned. For example, who would imagine that *The New Republic* and *The National Review* would arrive at startlingly similar conclusions on the necessity of the American role in Yugoslavia? Or who could anticipate that the Republican National Committee publication, *Rising Tide*, would paint a picture of American imperialism. "The war against the Serbs in Kosovo was an exercise not of any global village, but of great powers," writes Michael Kelly, "and the great powers pick and choose their moral causes."

Professor Cushman's ad hominem remarks are not accidental asides. Because I am older and have been touched by Vietnam, he thinks that I am stamped with a fear of using military power. This is gratuitous, even insulting, and could hardly be wider of the mark! As everyone from Machiavelli to von Clausewitz understood, it is where, when and how a nation employs power that concerns the serious student of international affairs, not the sheer fact of violence. I fully supported the American defense of the sovereignty of Kuwait when it came under Iraqi attack. Indeed, I would have liked to have seen the job finished, with our troops entering Baghdad to remove Saddam Hussein by military force if needed. Appeals to generational considerations also presuppose that being younger is somehow

being wiser. Linking psychological impulses with the age factor, and both as part of the fabric of opposition to war is self-serving and methodologically suspect.

Professor Cushman makes a simple error of fact about my age and its implications that borders on caricature. My generation was raised and came of age during World War Two—not Vietnam. I spent days studying maps of Europe and nights examining silhouettes of German and Japanese enemy aircraft that might penetrate US borders! I was reared in the anti-fascist struggles, believed that World War II was a just war—and still do. Indeed, I knew few Jewish youngsters who thought differently. My earliest exposure to war was the Spanish Civil War, since my sister had a fiancée who was killed in the Battle for Madrid. Today, I am far less certain of the necessity or virtues of that war than I was at the time. I make these personal points only because the facts of autobiography are no more conducive to evidence than claiming the World War II "generation" favors war but those who grew up in the Vietnam era are somehow forever destined to oppose war. My position on the war in Yugoslavia deserves being dealt with on its merits, not as a sociology of knowledge rendition of my motives through a cracked and distant mirror.

Cushman's curious reliance upon one of Lewis Feuer's less sagacious ideas that there is a "constructive imperialism" as well as a "destructive imperialism" is an unnerving reminder that those with a monopoly of power also insinuate a monopoly of ideology. It is true that history demands tough choices in an impure political arena. My moral objection to the war in Yugoslavia is that tough choices were not made. Instead, the easy choice to use the overwhelming air superiority of the United States and United Kingdom was made in order to avoid a tough choice—ground force deployments—precisely in an effort to keep politics "pure." The US-NATO alliance forces incurred virtually no military losses, though just about everybody else in this hopeless and hapless conflict suffered enormous

human and material losses. The fraudulent metaphor in all of this is not my reminder of Vietnam, but Cushman's insistence that this war had to be fought in the name of human rights.

Despite his professed animus for Leftist intellectuals, Cushman trots out the German Marxist Walter Benjamin on the differences between analogy and metaphor. Cushman might have spared the readers of *Society* such a lecture. On page 8 of my article, I explicitly say "The analogy between the wars in Kosovo and Vietnam is more psychological than geographical." I then state in the very next paragraph that "The parallels are not complete." But even disregarding the examples I gave of differences between the conflicts in Vietnam and Yugoslavia, and Cushman's tendentious lecture on Simmel, here are the reasons for my comparison of Kosovo and Vietnam: (1) The recourse to moral rhetoric in which South Vietnam and now Kosovo represent virtue, while North Vietnam and Yugoslavia represent unmitigated evil. (2) The uses of bombing as a primary mechanism of the conflict. The helicopter "chopper war" in Vietnam, and the heavy aircraft bombardment over Yugoslavia, were both launched against military forces that were essentially ground based with no air retaliation potentials, save crude anti-aircraft batteries. (3) The broad uses of multinational cover—especially in the early stages of Vietnam, and assuredly in the fictive idea that NATO was actually in charge of the Yugoslavia activity. (4) Reliance upon unpopular military warlords, gangsters and terrorists to maintain civil obedience. (5) Policy confusion as to the goals of the conflict. In Vietnam the goal was to secure an independent South Vietnam, yet at times, we argued the case for the destruction of the Communist North, lest a domino effect occur. In Yugoslavia the situation is no less muddled: we strive to secure a return of Kosovar refugees, end ethnic cleansing, and delegitimize Slobodan Milosovic. (6) We plan escalation but have no timetables for evacuating of military forces. In Vietnam, American troops were supposed to leave as part of the Paris Peace

Accords of 1973. In fact it was only with the fall of Saigon in 1975 and the total end of the South Vietnam regime that the United States actually left.

With respect to Yugoslavia, the conditions under which the "police force" will leave are extremely vague. American peacekeepers were supposed to be out of Bosnia in six months. It is now years later and they are still there. Like Vietnam, the build up of armed conflict in Yugoslavia has been slow and steady. I find it intriguing that Cushman takes refuge in the idea of "constructive" imperialism with its dire implication that policing the world is just the global equivalent of tough love, since in the aftermath World War Two we occupied Germany and Japan. Talk about dangerous analogies: I always thought that World War Two was an anti-imperialist war, a war to stop the murder and aggression of the fascists and National Socialists.

Cushman's point about Western intellectuals' response to the NATO campaign is half-right, half-wrong, and entirely irrelevant to anything in my article. I acknowledged, indeed emphasized the point that intellectual responses to the war in Yugoslavia crossed conventional lines of Left and Right. It is true that some prominent intellectuals opposed American intervention. It is equally the case, that other hard left-wing figures like Vanessa Redgrave and Susan Sontag effusively supported such participation. Conservatives like Richard John Neuhaus of *First Things* opposed United States entry into Yugoslavia, while others like Norman Podhoretz in *The National Review* supported the war. But neither made an appeal to "imperialism," while both expressed a deep affection for American values. Wars have a way of redefining ideological fault lines. This one is no different. My article was not an attempt to probe the biases and anti- or pro-imperialist sentiments of commentators but simply to inquire as to whether the American national interest was being advanced by this adventure. I am fully aware of, and largely accept, Lewis Feuer's views on the nature of imperialism, good and evil. But to argue from such large-scale premises about the val-

ues of those in opposition to the intervention in Yugoslavia strikes me as a reach. Cushman's appraisal presumes a bias in analysis on the part of those in opposition to the war but leaves unmentioned the bias of those in favor of intervention.

Cushman wants to have it both ways: to assert a right of humanitarian intervention (ostensibly on behalf of morality) while advocating a cynical policy of selective punishment of human rights violations based on "reasons and expediency." Cushman ducks the tough choice between morality and pragmatism and argues for intervention on the side of the Kosovars since "no politics is pure." But my article makes quite plain that whether the actions taken by American power were grounded in moral principle or pragmatic necessity is not the issue. Intervention is not a hand wringing exercise in choice, but was used because virtually no casualties were at stake and the opponent was too weak to resist. The curse of the Vietnam Syndrome is to desire victories but never at the expense of casualties. The Clinton administration's response to the virtual threat of the Chinese communist government to annihilate the Taiwanese democratic government is indicative not of pragmatism, but of cowardice. In canceling a pending visit of Pentagon officials to Taipei, the capital of Taiwan, the president noted that "I don't think this was the best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative." And even when questioned about what the United States would do in the event of attack by China on Taiwan, he said that the United States "would be required to view it with the gravest concern"—in short, do nothing but give hard stares (Press Conference, July 21). My essay was not intended to encourage readers to choose sides between Serbs and Kosovars; I argued we should not engage in conflict unless and until the American national interest is at stake. Our interests are far more profoundly linked to the survival of a free and democratic Taiwan than to anything going in to the Yugoslav quagmire. Poli-

cies in Yugoslavia were not predicated on a human rights agenda as Cushman insists, but on a selective show of force, one that reminds Europeans a half century after the close of the Second World War that Europe is still incapable of running affairs in its own backyard. In short, my views are rooted in Hans Morgenthau and not Karl Marx. The guilt by association imputation of old fashioned knee-jerk Leftism is badly wide of the mark.

My article dealt with Yugoslavia not as some major power with the capacity of world domination, but as a third-rank power that aimed in a variety of contexts to build a nation of different peoples and ethnic and religious backgrounds. This is not all unlike the premises of the American founding fathers! This is not to deny the excesses, the brutalities, and the viciousness of ethnic cleansing. Nor is this to deny that Serbs, no less than other ethnic groups that comprised the old Yugoslav Federation, were given to anti-Semitism. Hatred of

Jews seems to be one of the few uniting aspects of many ethnic groups in the region. We now witness the plight of the 150,000 or so Serbs being given the same ugly medicine in return—with American and NATO troops having to defend people who several months earlier they attacked! Let us keep in mind that the Serbs fought bravely and well against the Nazi Wehrmacht; that the victory of Marshal Tito in the 1940s, his confrontation with Stalin and the Comintern, represented an early major breach in the iron wall of communist aggression. Let us dare to mention that the Serbs represent now as they did in the fourteenth century a Christian civilization - which for all of its anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim characteristics, is still a factor in real world politics—both morally and politically.

To those colleagues who in addition to Professor Cushman took seriously the concerns raised and the arguments advanced in my article goes my deep appreciation. This includes David

Marsland who supported the war along the fault lines stated by Norman Podhoretz, as well as John Sibley Butler, Richard Falk, Theodore Becker, Paul Gottfried, Eli Ginzberg, Victor Navasky, and Bruce Russett, who in varying degrees opposed the war. Butler's statement in particular contains profound observations on how a democratic nation can show the face of wrath and then the spirit of compassion to those it had just annihilated. The strange American tradition of identifying people as good and governments as evil, as a rationale for intervention is a phenomena that needs to be examined with care. Many of the observations made in correspondence go beyond the purposes of my piece. But what I have failed to do, others will doubtless accomplish.

*Irving Louis Horowitz*

*Editor-at-Large, Society*

*Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor*

*Rutgers University*

*New Brunswick, New Jersey*

## Civil Society and America

*To the Editor:*

Having enjoyed an occasional trenchant essay in your magazine, I was disappointed to see the July/August 1999 symposium on "Civil Society and the American Family," most of which only provides evidence of one of the primary erosions over the past century—social science itself (with one exception, Prof. Popenoe's piece). Of course, symposia themselves are not noted for producing great documents, in contrast to individual efforts over the centuries. A few of Samuel Johnson's, Chesterton's or Coventry Patmore's aphorisms tell us volumes while the Council on Civil Society only ruffles the pages. For one thing, while the symposium makes token mention of religion, it never comes close to centering its dialectic around this crucial pillar of Western civilization with its splendid ordered freedoms—the anchor that gives meaning to those freedoms—Judaean-Christianity. All human substitutes shorn of their Judaeo-Christian source

sound much like Clinton-Gore-Blair-Hillary social (pagan) religions—or new deals, great societies, and the like, none of which have measured up to the old deal.

Sociologists can push forever for their favored "solutions" but "without God all is permitted," and as Pierre Manent realizes with Tocqueville: "In regulating the family, religion indirectly and powerfully helps to regulate society and the state." This does not mean government administration of the Church, but government's protection of the free exercise of religion, a fateful charge long since bungled by Western jurists. Sociologists already have a ready-made "agenda" in the Bible, and the oldest existing think tank in the world—the Church, if only they muster the will to use them.

The presumptuousness of Jean Bethke Elshtain's essay trying to re-encapsulate our society, when we need only return to the proven greats for guidance, is really stunning. The almost boundless thought of the past, with two centuries of modern exegesis on its au-

thors, resoundingly outshines such efforts. Especially unsettling is Steven Nock's effort to explain it all, imposing his 1990s secular humanistic conceptions of how we should live, announcing endless "new models," "charges," "new patterns," "unimportant gender" (a solecism—why does he refrain from using the more accurate word "sex"?), "equality of the sexes" (a political abstraction, not a sociological truism), "recognition and accommodation to the changes in women's lives," "men must become a part of the gender revolution," etc. All of these are more indicative of his own prejudices than biological reality, as if he had adopted the feminist ideology—hardly a paragon for scientific thinking. I'll put my money on Steven Goldberg's and Michael Levin's research every time, since it seems that Professor Nock's research has a long way to go. Meanwhile his sociology is more akin to socialism than a thoughtful Hayekian-von Misesian dialectic.

*W. Edward Chynoweth*

*Sanger, California*